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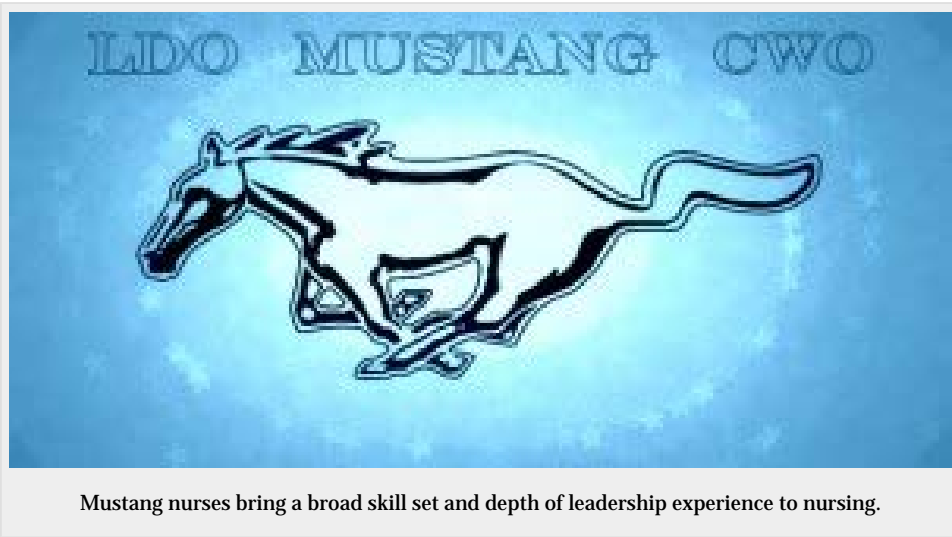
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Mustang Nurse

Filed under FLEET AND THE FLEET MARINE FORCE, FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY, LEADERSHIP (NO COMMENTS)

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What is a mustang?

To most people, a mustang is thought to be a wild, untamed American horse but the word “mustang” has an alternative meaning to those of us in the military. A Mustang is a military officer who previously served within the enlisted ranks. The history of this term is a bit clouded but it is believed to have started as a term given to soldiers who earned a battlefield commission or as a naval term for enlisted Sailors who rose from the ranks of enlisted to officer.

There are many military nurses serving our country worldwide; many were enlisted prior to becoming officers in their respective Nurse Corps. Right now approximately 25 percent of active duty Navy nurses previously served as enlisted members. Some join the Nurse Corps ranks via a commissioning program while others discharge from active duty,




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attend school, then re-enter the military as nurses. Many military nurses enjoyed successful careers as enlisted Hospital Corpsman, Combat Medics, or Medical Technicians where they were first introduced to the medical field. Others have come from occupations such as aviation, administration, security, communications, construction, intelligence, engineering, and even infantry or combat systems.



I have found that the prospect of serving those who serve is the real attraction and becoming a military nurse takes the concept of service to a higher level.

So what drives an enlisted service member with an already successful career to become a Nurse Corps officer? Although pay and benefits increase with a commission, I have found that the prospect of serving those who serve is the real attraction and becoming a military nurse takes the concept of service to a higher level. Our patients make sacrifices every day; not only the active duty patients but also family members who are uprooted from their social networks, separated from loved ones and relocated to foreign countries. Our military families must still continue to work,

keep their house in order, and attend school despite the added stress of deployments and frequent relocations. It is both empowering and humbling to care for our military community!

Mustang nurses bring a broad skill set and depth of leadership experience to nursing. Many mustangs have deployed numerous times before attending nursing school; some have combat experience and others have provided critically needed support during humanitarian missions or rescue operations. It is interesting to meet fellow mustangs and hear of their enlisted experiences and stories of becoming a nurse.

The best part about being a mustang, however, is the experience of mentoring enlisted members who have their sights set on becoming a nurse. It is hard to describe the excitement one feels upon being selected for commissioning and reliving that moment through others is invigorating. I have yet to meet a mustang nurse who was not only willing but excited to provide guidance and share wisdom with those following the “yellow brick road” to a commission in the Nurse Corps.



it is pretty cool to work on a unit with nurses who have experience with automatic weapons, combat tactics, submarine warfare and helicopter operations!

By embracing the diversity that prior-enlisted officers bring to the Nurse Corps, the military is able to create camaraderie between patients and caregivers that extends beyond the bedside. Not to mention, it is pretty cool to work on a unit with nurses who have experience with automatic weapons, combat tactics, submarine warfare and helicopter operations!

“There is no honor greater than to be called ‘Mustang’. You have long epitomized the warrior virtues of

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courage, devotion to duty, sacrifice, and imaginative leadership.”

- General Alfred M. Gray USMC, 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

References:

<http://www.marinecorpsmustang.org/>

<http://navymustangs.com/whatis.phtml>

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